

J O U R N E Y O F A M I L I T A R Y W I F E

Deployed

Steps of Hope
in Times of Uncertainty

SMALL GROUP FACILITATOR GUIDE

(JOURNEY 1)



God's Presence Helps Me Wait (Week 1)

Waypoints 1–5

Materials needed

- Whiteboard
- Small sticky notes (several for each participant)
- Sharpie marker for each participant
- Poster size paper with large letter “D”
- Chart paper with title “BLESSINGS IN WAITING” (*one chart per group of three people*)

Stop and get your bearings (5 minutes)

- Begin the class with prayer.
- Ask if anyone would like to share a highlight from the readings of the past week.

Where shall we go? (10 minutes)

- Give each woman several sticky notes.
- Ask: What are words you would use to describe deployment? Write the words that come to your mind on the sticky note provided. Use one note per word. When you are finished, add your notes to the chart.
- Invite the women to place their words on a chart on which you have drawn a large “D.” You will use this chart to close the session in prayer.
- When everyone has had a chance to participate ask: What are your observations? Are there themes that emerge? Obvious needs? Apparent attitudes? We will come back to the chart at the end of the session.

Read the map (15 minutes)

The readings (waypoints) for this Thirty-Day Journey are found in the book of Exodus. Exodus is the second book in the Hebrew Scriptures (Old Testament) and is a continuation of the book of Genesis.¹ Genesis recalls the promise that Israel would become a nation through the offspring of a man named Abraham. The book of Genesis ends with a relatively small clan (the Israelites) living in slavery and exile in Egypt.

Note: It is probable that the total population of Israel at this time numbered in the millions. The people were living as slaves of the state, serving the interests of the pharaoh.²

Exodus holds the account of God's miraculous deliverance of his people. As you journey through the pages, you will see God as one who commits himself to a relationship and makes his presence known to his people.³

What does Genesis 50:24 tell you about what will happen in Exodus?

¹ A Thirty-Day Journey of Faith: Dedicated to God's Plan is available in this *Journey of a Military Wife* series. The devotions (waypoints) and Bible studies in *Dedicated* focus on the journey of Abraham and Sarah in the book of Genesis.

² Tremper Longman III and Raymond B. Dillard, *An Introduction to the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2006), 65.

³ Tremper Longman III, *How to Read Exodus* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2009), 44.

God used a man named Moses to turn the tide for the people of Israel.⁴ What do you learn about Moses from the book of Acts 7:20–22?

God protected Moses as a child and then called him as an adult to lead the Israelites out of bondage. The process of deliverance from Egyptian slavery was not an easy or quick process. God's hand was on Moses throughout his life. His experiences prepared him for the challenges he would face as he carried out God's plan.

Take time to explore (15 minutes)

You may ask, "What do Moses and the Israelites have to do with deployment?" The book of Exodus chronicles a type of deployment. Though different from deployment you may face as a military wife, you can apply the biblical principles presented. The deployment described in Exodus was the first of this type for the Israelites. They were not sure what their journey would hold. No doubt, they wondered if they would even continue to exist as a people. They had no resource guides or agencies to look to for assistance. They did not have friends who had walked the road before. This was a maiden voyage and they learned some valuable first person lessons that can benefit those who are looking toward, or are in the midst of deployment.

God got the attention of Moses through a burning bush. How has God used deployment to get your attention?

God called Moses to deploy, but the exodus did not happen quickly or quietly. How can waiting for and in deployment cause you to doubt God's faithfulness?

What can you do to counteract doubt?

What does Exodus 5:22 say Moses did while he waited?

Join with two people and read the following verses. What do you discover about waiting on God? Write your findings on the BLESSINGS IN WAITING chart provided.

- Isaiah 40:31
- Psalm 27:13–14
- Proverbs 3:5–6
- Isaiah 30:18
- Romans 5:3–4
- Colossians 1:11

Invite participants to post their charts and share their discoveries.

How can you apply what you have discovered to deployment?

Travelogue (5 minutes)

Bethany described deployment as "the most challenging time of (her) life." Even though she and her husband knew that deployment was coming she hoped it would get cancelled or postponed. She added, "When he really left, it somehow felt unreal. I watched the bus drive his unit away until I could

4 Authors use several names for the offspring of Abraham: people of Israel, children of Israel, Hebrews, Israelites, and God's chosen people.

not see it anymore. I did not want to go home. I sat in our car awhile. It was too early in the morning to call anyone. On my way home, I just cried and prayed.”

As Bethany adjusted to the reality of deployment, she decided to use the time waiting for her husband to return in a positive way. She read books that encouraged her to grow as an individual and a wife. She listened to uplifting sermons and music determined to focus on God and stay open to him through praise and prayer. She did not hesitate to seek support from others. She made a conscious decision not to feel sorry for herself and looked for ways to be a blessing to others.

In what ways have you been blessed by the way you have seen military wives wait during deployment?

Pack your bags (5 minutes)

What do you learn from Matthew 6:34 about waiting?

Use the “D” charts prepared at the beginning of the class as a prayer guide making each word the basis of a one-sentence prayer (e.g., Lord, help me know you are with me when I feel lonely.)

God's Presence Helps Me Trust (Week 2)

Waypoints 6–10

Materials needed

- Whiteboard
- An object that represents a family tradition or ritual in your home to share as an example
- Write the following verses or references on cards or slips of paper to use for closing prayer: Joshua 1:9; Psalm 9:10; Psalm 20:7; Psalm 56:3; Isaiah 12:2; Romans 15:13 (*Give the Scriptures out at the beginning of the session.*)

Stop and get your bearings (5 minutes)

- Begin the class with prayer.
- Ask if anyone would like to share a highlight from the readings of the past week.

Where shall we go? (5 minutes)

- Show the object you brought that represents a family tradition or ritual.
- You may not have an object to show, but join with two other people and share a family tradition or ritual from either your family of origin or your immediate family. The tradition does not have to be a holiday tradition.
- Take a moment to allow a few people to share their rituals or traditions.

Read the map (15 minutes)

Exodus 12 records God's instructions to Moses for instituting the ritual of Passover. What reason do you find in Exodus 12:23–27 for this Passover ritual?

The same Hebrew word, *pasah* for “pass over” is used in Exodus 12:23 and Isaiah 31:5.

How does Isaiah 31:5 portray the Lord?

The NET Bible provides a vivid translation of Isaiah 31:5:

Just as birds hover over a nest, so the LORD who commands armies will protect Jerusalem. He will protect and deliver it; as he passes over he will rescue it.

How does Isaiah 31:5 help you better understand the Lord's action in Exodus 12:23?

Note: The word *pasah* has to do with protection, shielding, and delivering. The Lord is not portrayed as ‘passing over’ the door but as the protector of the door from the slaughtering angel. The blood on the doorpost purifies the doorway in preparation for the Lord's presence.⁵

What could be the reason that Passover took place just before nightfall? “Pesah” or Passover takes place just before nightfall, because night is when fear can be the strongest.

In what way is the use of the doorway symbolic?

⁵ Walton & Matthews, *IVP Bible Background Commentary* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2000), 95.

The symbolism of the doorway lies in its being the boundary between internal and external, kin and stranger, familiar and foreign, safe and dangerous. It is a home's point of vulnerability. Crossing the threshold in either direction can be dangerous: one leaves the safety of home, or one risks importing the alien. This is even the reason we do not allow a bride to cross her new threshold on foot, lest misfortune follow.⁶

Take time to explore (15 minutes)

- How do rituals strengthen relationships?
- How are family rituals or traditions a source of comfort? How do they build trust?
- God's instruction through the ritual of Passover was to remind the Israelites of his faithful protection and guidance. They were never to forget what he did for them in Egypt.
- Why is it easy to forget God's faithfulness in the midst of difficult circumstances?
- What are things you have done or can do to remind yourself of God's faithfulness?
- What are ways God has reminded you of his faithfulness during deployment?

Travelogue (5 minutes)

Read the following reports from military wives about the practice of ritual and tradition during deployment. Underline anything that stands out to you.

Holly, a veteran wife of multiple deployments, says, "Traditions provide continuity in some small part of our lives—a touchstone of sorts."

Carlee tied a yellow ribbon on their banister for every month of deployment. At the end of each month, she and her young son ceremoniously removed a ribbon.

Alicia and her girls made a paper chain for two deployments. She said, "We did the number of weeks instead of days and every Sunday we ripped one off, used it to write something special that happened that week and mailed them to daddy. He reassembled the chain on the other end. The girls could see it behind him when we did a video chat and it made them so happy. The activity prompted conversation between them and their dad."

Stacy shared: "We have a tradition of opening a pair of pajamas on Christmas Eve. When my husband was deployed, I still bought him a pair, wrapped them up and mailed them to him. On Christmas Eve we were able to video chat with him while he opened his pajamas and then we each opened ours. As much as it helped the kids feel closer to their dad, it really helped my husband feel like he was still part of Christmas and our family traditions."

Laura used deployment to encourage gratitude and praise in her family. Her family's faith ritual involved the creative use of a piggy bank. She told us: "We had a huge piggy bank that we named Petunia the Praise Pig. I cut small squares of paper and put them in a dish beside her. I told the girls to look for good things throughout the day. Whenever something "praiseworthy" occurred, we wrote it down and dropped it in Petunia. Over the course of the year, we collected a whole pile of praises to read over with my husband when he returned. I felt like in addition to having

6 William Henry Propp, *Exodus 1–18: The Anchor Yale Bible Commentaries* (New York: Doubleday, 1999), 440.

something to do with him when he got home, it helped us all focus on looking for the good in each day, rather than dwelling on the negative.”

A ritual that Carol and her husband observe is to hold hands when they pray. Carol reported, “While my husband was deployed I held my own hand to bridge the gap.” The practice brought comfort to her during her husband’s absence.

What are your thoughts?

Pack your bags (5 minutes)

What is a ritual of faith you can establish during this time of deployment? Write it down in the space provided.

Encourage the women to write down one thing they can do to strengthen their trust in God during this time. Affirm their involvement in this study.

Close this session by asking those who had Scripture cards to read: Joshua 1:9; Psalm 9:10; Psalm 20:7; Psalm 56:3; Isaiah 12:2; Romans 15:13.

Pray: Lord, teach us to trust you and make this time a time to remember your faithfulness. Amen.

God's Presence Helps Me Sing (Week 3)

Waypoints 11–15

Materials needed

- Whiteboard
- Recipe cards for next week
- Music for “name that tune” (CD/iPod/iPad)
- Song “In Christ Alone” by Keith and Kristyn Getty

Stop and get your bearings (5 minutes)

Begin the class with prayer.

Ask if anyone would like to share a highlight from the readings of the past week.

Where shall we go? (10 minutes)

Play a simple game of “Name that Tune.” Bring 6 to 10 different songs with you to the group gathering (to make it easy, make sure they are fairly popular songs including secular or children songs). If possible, burn all of these songs together onto one CD or playlist.

Once the group is ready, start the first song and let it play for about 5 seconds. See if anyone can guess the title of the song. If nobody gets it at first, play the song again and let it run for 10 seconds. Repeat this activity for the rest of your songs, and keep a tally of who guesses each one correctly. If you have the means, give a new CD as a gift to the person who guessed the most titles.⁷

Or, play a few rounds of “hum that tune”: Give each person in the group a small piece of paper with the name of a nursery rhyme or other song written on the paper (i.e. “Row, row, row your boat,” “Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star,” etc.). On the count of three, invite everyone to starting humming their song. They must then find everyone humming the same song.

Read the map (15 minutes)

This week you read about the children of Israel leaving Egypt led by a pillar of cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night. They miraculously crossed the parted Red Sea and then watched as waters engulfed their enemies.

A song marked this important event. Moses and Miriam led the Israelites in a song of victory as they remembered God's past acts of deliverance from the Egyptians. They sang a song of expectation as they looked forward to God's faithfulness in the Promised Land.⁸

It is interesting to note the crucial role women played throughout the exodus, from the midwives who protected Moses, to his adoption by Pharaoh's daughter. God used Miriam, the sister of Moses, to aid in the protection and rearing of Moses as a child, and later to help Moses judge and lead the people. She is the first person the Bible names as a “prophetess” (Exodus 15:20).⁹

⁷ <http://www.smallgroups.com/meeting-builder/icebreakers/name-that-tune.html?paging=off>

⁸ D. Guthrie and J. A. Motyer, *The Eerdmans Bible Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1987), 128.

⁹ Victor Hamilton, *Exodus: An Exegetical Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic), 236.

In Exodus 15 Miriam led the women in celebration through song and dance. Ritual singing by women was common in ancient Israel. Women sang to welcome returning warriors, greeting them with songs to express their relief and joy for the defeat of enemies. Miriam's song and dance reminds us of the necessity of celebration. In the example of Miriam, we can see the value of celebration to release pent-up stress brought on by the battles of life.¹⁰

Take time to explore (15 minutes)

Have the women form groups of two or three. Divide the Scriptures below among the groups.

The Bible records a lot about singing. What information do you find in these Scriptures about singing?

- Exodus 15:21
- Psalm 147:1, 7
- Psalm 149:1, 5
- Zephaniah 3:17
- Zechariah 2:10
- James 5:13
- Ephesians 5:19
- Colossians 3:16

After 3–5 minutes, invite the women to share their discoveries. Write representative words on a white board as the women report.

Read the following paragraphs and underline anything that stands out to you:

God has woven song into the fabric of our DNA. Songs in Scripture are about what God has done for his people. They are songs filled with thanksgiving and wonder of God's might and power.

Singing is not the means by which we enter the presence of God, but it is a way in which we can express the emotion that we feel. The very activity of singing helps us to engage with the emotional dimensions of the truths we are saying or the petitions we are praying. In other words, singing plays a critical role in helping us bridge the gap between the cognitive and affective aspects of our humanity in helping us process our emotional pain and so bring us to a point of praise.¹¹

What are your thoughts?

What are triggers that can turn a song into a grumble for you?

We do not always have to have a big smile on our face, but we must guard our hearts and minds from lapsing into a negative attitude. God has given us music and celebration to help in that process.

Travelogue (5 minutes)

Military wife Kay struggled with celebration during her husband's deployment. She found it hard to be flexible with all the unknowns that accompanied her husband's absence. She reported: "Deployment made me see that learning to be flexible is hard and not for the faint of heart. More often than not it is a three steps forward, two steps backward process. I always want to be more enthusiastic about

¹⁰ Jeanne L. Porter, *Leading Ladies: Transformative Biblical Images for Women's Leadership* (Philadelphia: Innisfree Press, 2000), 69.

¹¹ <http://www.thegospelcoalition.org/article/the-role-of-singing-in-the-life-of-the-church>, accessed January 3, 2014.

celebrating the one step forward, than I am complaining about the two steps backward. In all honesty, I am much better at bemoaning my lack of progress or feeling stuck than I am in rejoicing in even an inch of advance. Oh, that I would learn the art of celebration, no matter how small.”

What advice would you offer Kay about learning the art of celebration in the midst of deployment?

Pack your bags (5 minutes)

Take a moment to list the things you have grumbled about this week.

Now take a moment to list something you can celebrate.

Close the session by playing and singing the song “In Christ Alone” by Keith and Kristyn Getty. This song is a wonderful illustration of singing what Colossians 3:16 describes as “the word of Christ.” It is an example of theology set to music, and provides an opportunity to celebrate all that Christ has done for us.

Provide recipe cards for each participant. Invite them to use the card to write an easy and quick recipe or meal idea to share next week.

God's Presence Helps Me Rest (Week 4)

Waypoints 16–20

Materials needed

- Whiteboard
- Recipe cards

Stop and get your bearings (5 minutes)

- Begin the class with prayer.
- Ask if anyone would like to share a highlight from the readings of the past week.

Where shall we go? (5 minutes)

- Mealtime during deployment can be a challenge. What are some easy recipes or meal ideas you have used to help make meals easier during your husband's absence?
- Invite the women to share their favorite quick recipe or easy meal idea. Have extra recipe cards for newcomers. Take the cards and reproduce them for everyone who returns next week.

Read the map (15 minutes)

This week in our journey with Moses and the children of Israel, we read about several ways the Lord provided for them to rest. What were these provisions?

- Manna/food
- The command to rest on the Sabbath with provision of not having to gather food
- Water from a rock
- Friends to help when battle weary
- Delegation of responsibility

A pattern developed as they traveled:

They faced difficult circumstances which ...
Challenged their faith and caused them to ...
Grumble against the Lord and ...
Idealize the past.¹²

The pattern of the Lord in turn, was consistent gracious provision for all their needs.

- What are ways you see this pattern in your own life?
- What is the antidote to this pattern?

Take time to explore (15 minutes)

Read the following passages. How do they speak to the issue of resting in God's provision? (If possible, divide the group into three smaller groups or partners and assign one passage to each group.)

¹² Brian Lowe, The Exodus Church, Sermon series: Prayers for the Journey: Rest in God's Provision, August 5, 2012 (<http://theexoduschurch.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/08/Rest-in-Gods-Provision.pdf>)

- Matthew 6:25–34
- Habakkuk 3:17–19
- Philippians 4:10–20

What does the grumbling of the people in Exodus 15–17 communicate to God?

What directive is given in Philippians 2:14?

Grumbling is the low-toned muttering we do against God and others that often takes place at an emotional level. The word literally means “A secret displeasure in the heart, and a sullen discontent that leads to criticism.” The word is an onomatopoeic word, which simply means it sounds like what it means, kind of like hiss, hum, or murmur.

What part does lack of rest play in a tendency to grumble?

What is the antidote to grumbling?

God used friends to help Moses when he was tired and volunteers to help when he was overworked. What part does friendship and accepting help from others play in the way you approach deployment?

What keeps you from accepting help? What keeps you from asking for help?

What are your thoughts on the following quote:

“When you give your soul rest, you open it to the peace Jesus intends for you.”

—John Ortberg, *Soul Keeping*

Travelogue (5 minutes)

Claire and her family experienced a yearlong deployment during their first military assignment. Still adjusting to the military lifestyle Claire had to quickly adjust to her husband’s absence. She worked hard to get to the point where she could say, “I was reminded that my role is to support my husband, but that a season of deployment (separation) is unique in that the energy I usually expend in doing for him can now take on a greater focus for deepening my relationship with The Lord; cultivating that relationship. I now have (in some ways) a little extra ‘me time’ and can find ways for more self-reflection and self-improvement. This time is often hard-fought to find when ‘life as usual’ is going on. So, therefore, enjoy it, embrace it, make the most of it.”

What do you think about Claire’s story?

Pack your bags (5 minutes)

God provided food for the children of Israel as they traveled toward the Promised Land. The daily provision of manna was a constant sign of God’s presence.¹³

What has God provided during this deployment that reminds you of his presence?

¹³ James K. Bruckner, *Exodus: Understanding the Bible Commentary Series* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2008), 133.

God's Presence Helps Me Learn (Week 5)

Waypoints 21–25

Materials needed

- Whiteboard
- Poster board or paper (larger than 8 ½ x 11)
- Colored markers

Stop and get your bearings (5 minutes)

- Begin the class with prayer.
- Ask if anyone would like to share a highlight from the readings of the past week.

Where shall we go? (10 minutes)

Consider displaying a poster of “family rules.” You can find creative examples on Pinterest. Include such things as:

- Always be kind
- Say please and thank you
- Share
- Forgive
- Never stay angry
- Laugh often
- Hug often
- Love God
- Love one another

Spoken or unspoken rules are a part of every healthy family. Such rules serve as conduits for setting family standards. They are important in the development of responsibility and cooperation. They reveal what your family values most.

Take a few minutes and create a poster of those things that are important in your family. We will post your creations around the room when you are finished.

Read the map (15 minutes)

What comes to mind when you hear “The Ten Commandments”?

Read this statement and share your thoughts (*printed at top of participant handout*):

“The Ten Commandments is more than just a list of dos and don’ts. More importantly, they define a relationship.”¹⁴

God had been teaching his people from the beginning what it was like to be in relationship with him. There on Mount Sinai, Moses had a private tutoring session with God where he learned lessons about God’s character written on tablets of stone.

The Ten Commandments give us a picture of the character of God. They reveal what is important to God.

Join with two other people and read Exodus 20:1–17. List what you see in these Scriptures as important to God.

¹⁴ <http://bibleresources.americanbible.org/node/1035>, accessed January 6, 2014.

The Law given by God to Moses included more than the Ten Commandments; it also included other directions concerning the way the Israelites were to live together and worship God. God did not mean the Law to simply be a set of rules to obey, but principles for living. The Law was very similar to many of the legal codes used in the world at that time. The directives held the expectations for the civil, religious, and moral lives of the Israelites.¹⁵ God was training the people to see themselves as a nation. He wanted them to gain a sense of national identity.

What do you learn from Exodus 19:3–6 about the relationship God desired to have with the Israelites? The Israelites repeatedly failed as they learned about their God and what it meant to be his people. Thankfully, God is a forgiving teacher who abounds in patience and is rich in mercy.

Take time to explore (15 minutes)

The deployment experienced by the Israelites turned their lives upside down and on the surface, their future looked uncertain. In the midst of this turmoil, God revealed divine truths that not only gave guidance then, but also have been words of truth for every generation since.

Feelings of turmoil can accompany deployment. However, it may be during such a time you find God come to you with a fresh understanding of his divine truth. Such truth can serve as a lasting guide not just for this deployment but also throughout your life.

- What do you learn about the character of God from Exodus 34:6?
- What are you learning about the character of God during this deployment?
- How have you made yourself open and available to learn things about God during this time?

Deployment is a time when you can learn new things about God and increase your understanding of how he wants to relate with you. Unlike the Israelites, we do not just have a small written code to learn about God, we have his entire Word. The Bible, from beginning to end, reveals to us the heart of God and his great love for us.

Travelogue (5 minutes)

It was during a deployment that Marie sought out a Bible study with some other women in her husband's unit. In her own words:

Reflecting back on four deployments, I can clearly see how God drew me closer to him during those times. This happened mostly through studying the Bible with other military wives. There, I found a safe place to explore God for who he is. God used his word and the relationships I developed in those studies to prune and grow me in my faith.

What would keep a deployed spouse from experiencing what Marie has experienced?

Pack your bags (10 minutes)

Join with two other people and come up with your own Ten Commandments of Deployment.

¹⁵ Francis Chan, *Multiply* (Colorado Springs: David C. Cook, 2012), 191.

God's presence helps me finish (Week 6)

Waypoints 26–30

Materials needed

- Whiteboard

Stop and get your bearings (5 minutes)

- Begin the class with prayer.
- Ask if anyone would like to share a highlight from the readings of the past week.

Where shall we go? (5 minutes)

- Share with one other person something you started but never finished.
- Allow time for a few to share with the whole group.
- What kept you from finishing?

Read the map (15 minutes)

Describe the scene in Exodus 40:33–38.

This scene is the fulfillment of instructions God gave to Moses in Exodus 25:8–9: “And let them make me a sanctuary, that I may dwell in their midst. Exactly as I show you concerning the pattern of the tabernacle, and of all its furniture, so you shall make it.”

Chapters 25–27 of Exodus, provide a detailed account of how God intended the Israelites to build the tabernacle.

In chapters 28–29 God gave directions for the dedication of priests who would serve the people and minister to them.

What do you learn about God's plan in Exodus 29:43–46?

God carefully designed sacred space for his people. It was a space where he would dwell among them and travel with them.

Exodus 35:1–35 describes the rallying of the Israelites to do the work the Lord commanded them to do. It had to be a daunting task to consider building a tabernacle in the middle of the desert. How do you unite people for such a building project when so far they have grumbled, whined, and even worshipped at the foot of a golden calf instead of the God who delivered them from slavery?

In Exodus 35:20–29, how did the people respond to Moses' request for contributions to build the tabernacle?

The book of Exodus gives the account of enough miracles to let us know God could have created a tabernacle on his own. Yet, he invited the participation of willing folks to make it happen. He invites you to willingly participate in his work—a work he wants to do both in and through you.

Take time to explore (15 minutes)

If you are like me, you can find plenty of excuses not to be willing to do something—especially during a deployment.

What might the Lord be asking you to build during this time? Relationships? Memories? Organization? Health?

What excuses do you give not to build good things into your life?

Moses and the Israelites had more miles to go, but the completion of the tabernacle was a milestone for the journey. Why? (God's very presence would be with them.)

In the Old Testament God used a tabernacle and later a temple to hold his presence. But, no building or place can hold God's presence.

What do John 1:14 and 1 Corinthians 6:19 tell you about God's presence?

What do the following Scriptures tell you about finishing what God has started in you?

- Philippians 1:6
- 2 Timothy 4:6–8

Travelogue (5 minutes)

During her husband's deployment, Nellie started a business, Christina enrolled in college, and Tracy traveled Space-A to Europe with her home schooled kids for the education of a lifetime. Brenda wrote a book. Mary started a workout program and lost over fifty pounds. Jennifer began a prayer group with other deployed spouses. Celeste designed scrapbooks to catalog her family history. Sara pioneered a ministry that reaches out to other military wives. If you look closely at the things these women started and finished, it was not all about them. Their actions blessed others as well.

There are days when you just want to finish a sentence, let alone accomplish something that will bless others.

What is something you have started (or would like to start) during deployment that you are committed to finishing?

Pack your bags (10 minutes)

The journey of the Israelites had everything to do with the presence of God. The presence of God allowed Moses to finish the work (Exodus 40:33). The presence of God will help you finish—finish well—finish strong.

Close this time praying for one another. Ask God to help each one finish the journey of deployment stronger than when they started.